The Institute of Clinical and Translational Sciences and the Institute for Public Health have awarded four grants for the Opioid Epidemic Research Funding Program this year.

The Opioid Epidemic Research Funding Program is a new pilot funding program focused on strategies to address the opioid epidemic. Accepted projects included both early and late stage translational research. Funding for the 2018 projects were awarded to:

**Digital Therapy to Support Recovery among Pregnant Women with Opioid Use Disorder**  
*Team: Patricia Cavazos-Rehg, PhD, Donald Bohnenkamp, MD, and Alex Ramsey, PhD*  
*Washington University in St. Louis*  
The U.S. is experiencing an unprecedented opioid epidemic that urgently needs to be addressed, specifically among vulnerable populations like pregnant women. In this study we will recruit pregnant women with opioid use disorder and test a newly developed digital therapy that delivers engaging, credible, and relevant information about medication assisted treatment. *Funding support provided by the Institute for Public Health and the Institute of Clinical and Translational Sciences.*

**Precipitants of Opioid Initiation and Strategies to Reduce Use among Carpenters**  
*Team: Ann Marie Dale, PhD and Brian Gage, MD*  
*Washington University in St. Louis*  
This project will engage construction workers, a group at high risk for opioid use disorder. We will explore the relationships between opioid use and potentially preventable musculoskeletal disorders related to work activities. We will also test the effectiveness of a simple intervention to decrease opioid use by restricting the amount of opioids prescribed, and by providing an educational letter to patients with a new prescription. *Funding support provided by the Institute for Public Health.*

**Dissection of Pain-Induced Modulation of Prescription Opioid Use Pilot Study**  
*Team: Sarah Eisenstein, PhD, Laura Cavallone, MD, Kevin Black, MD, and Yi Su, PhD*  
*Washington University in St. Louis*  
Fifteen to 26% of patients misuse prescription opioids. Persistent pain, via kappa opioid receptors (KOPRs) in the brain, may contribute to opioid misuse. We will collect pilot and feasibility data for a larger study that will determine whether persistent pain is related to post-surgical opioid misuse and KOPRs using PET imaging with the radioligand [11C]LY2795050. The larger study will help identify treatment strategies for opioid misuse. *Funding support provided by the Institute of Clinical and Translational Sciences.*

**Novel Non-narcotic Based Therapeutics for Chronic Pain**  
*Team: Daniela Salvemini, PhD, Tim Doyle, PhD, and Zhoumou Chen, MD*  
*Saint Louis University*  
This project will test the hypothesis that traumatic nerve injuries dysregulate sphingolipid metabolism in the central nervous system and trigger the activation of the sphingosine 1-phosphate receptor subtype 1 (S1PR1) axis which contribute to neuropathic pain via neuroinflammation. Results are anticipated to identify S1PR1 as a target for therapeutic intervention with selective S1PR1 antagonists providing a novel approach to neuropathic pain management. *Funding support provided by the Institute of Clinical and Translational Sciences.*